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## USU Faculty Senate Faculty Forum Minutes, November 4, 2013

Utah State University

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**USU FACULTY SENATE  
FACULTY FORUM MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 4, 2013  
Taggart Student Center Auditorium**

The Faculty Forum is convened in lieu of the regularly scheduled November meeting of the Senate. This annual scheduled meeting of the Faculty Forum is open to all faculty members to attend and speak, with the exception of the President of the University, the Provost, the presidential appointees, deans and department heads, or the student members of the Senate, unless specifically requested by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Forum...Participants may discuss subjects of current interest, question and debate any policies and procedures, and formulate recommendations for consideration by the Faculty Senate...The Faculty Forum Executive Committee sets the agenda for the November meeting...The agenda includes all items raised by the petition(s) of faculty, together with items deemed pertinent by the Executive Committee. (Code Section: 402.9.1 & .9.2)

**Participation:** Slightly over 50 people attended.

Yanghee Kim, Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

**Welcome and review of the outcomes of last year's forum discussion.**

**Follow-up from Faculty Forum 2012:**

- **Opinions and concerns regarding the implementation and interpretation of results of the IDEA faculty rating system.**
- **How to successfully achieve tenure and/or promotion with a heavily teaching oriented role-statement.**

These first two items generated a lot of discussion last year. Renee Galliher, Faculty Senate Past President, reported that there have been many conversations with the Faculty Evaluation Committee and its' Chairperson Karen Mock who is working to make the IDEA rating system more useful for faculty in conjunction with the AAA Office for promotion and tenure purposes. The construction of a Canvas Course to provide teaching documentation resources to faculty is also underway by the FEC. It will be released when there is enough representation from across the colleges.

- **Fairness and consistency in allocating teaching assignments.** The Faculty Senate leadership heard of many instances from faculty across campus that there was a very arbitrary approach in allocating teaching assignments across the university. This raised questions and awareness of the larger issue of consistency in role statements. The Budget and Faculty Welfare Committee has added this item to their agenda for this year as an issue that they would like to explore. There is support from Provost Cockett to revise the role statement to be a more succinct understandable document. BFW will work with the Provosts office on this issue.
- **Faculty involvement in the appointment of upper level administrators.** There was no commentary on this during the open forum session of last year's Faculty Forum meeting, so this issue was not carried on for any official Faculty Senate business.

## **Forum Focused Discussion Items:**

### **1. Discussion of Revision Proposal to Faculty Code Section 405.12 Post Tenure Review Process.**

Renee Galliher summarized the activities of the Post Tenure Review Task Force and their proposed changes to code. A lengthy discussion followed and questions were raised on many issues including and are summarized here:

- The dominant majority of the attendants agreed that the current code could be improved. Some mentioned the external pressure from the legislature and NW evaluation and also the procedure itself that could be easier and clearer to follow.
- Concern about putting too much power in the hands of the department head. The collective wisdom is greater than that of individuals. A countering argument was made that the proposed revision would provide greater protection. Straw-poll hand votes indicated more attendants in favor of the proposed code in this regard.
- Concern about the college-wide committee. Judgments should be the responsibility of the colleagues in the same field (Code 401.8.3). From the hand vote, more attendants were in favor of the department-level committee.

#### **Additional individual comments:**

- This statement if from a person in a college where something similar this proposal has already been implemented: There are already examples of dept. heads trying to get rid of faculty. The college committee backed up the department head. This person also suggested creating a whole new code to state the faculty power explicitly.
- Another person countered that the committee apparently failed to do its job. The faculty at USU seems to not take advantage of the power they have. If the faculty is not willing to stand up and exercise their rights, that is a problem. We do not need to rewrite the whole code.
- There were some comments about the importance of tenure. The statement was made that tenure is a right we have achieved.
- A question was asked regarding whether we want to get onto salary adjustments in the 5-year reviews. Faculty wanted to have a place (situation), where they can talk about salaries.
- Discussion ensued about disseminating best practices of the post-tenure review process across campus, e.g., making the review more participatory and having points-based self-evaluations for each activity.
- The faculty present was in favor of efficiency: not having to go through the review every five years.

The Faculty Senate President stated that she felt this discussion had given the members of the Faculty Senate some direction on where to take the issue now.

### **2. Re-establishing a strong sense of shared governance.**

### **3. The diminished emphasis on the service components in the faculty role statements.**

The shared governance and service components in role statements discussions were intertwined and are summarized below:

Referring to 401.8.1 (4), the FS leadership expressed concerns about senior faculty not taking an active role in shared governance. To have shared governance established, service is vital: people have to volunteer to serve. Currently, the FS has vacancies to fill on the committees.

- In general, people have very little sense that there is shared governance at USU. There is a very limited mechanism for faculty to provide any feedback on new and existing policies. The FS does not appear to function independently from administration. People are dispirited and do not see any point in participating in the FS.

- In some colleges, administrators seem selective in their support of service activities, seemingly not valuing FS service. The faculty is evaluated, based on research productivity in their role statements. Junior faculty are explicitly discouraged from FS service.

- More frequent evaluations of administrators (regarding productivity and performance) could facilitate a sense of shared governance. Every 3 or 5 years, as it is now, is too far apart. Need to evaluate the administrators on an annual or semiannual basis.

### **Open Forum Discussion Summary**

- The Faculty Senate could encourage more open discussions (rather than handing down the agenda) in the meetings; the faculty should be encouraged to bring up new issues.

- A suggestion: the faculty plays an active role in car-pooling and air quality. A countering recommendation was made that the Sustainability Council might be a better place. The council drafts policies that go to the president; there is a representative from each college on the council. It has been very active and gotten a lot done.

- Need to facilitate easy communications between the faculty body and the FS leadership. An electronic forum on the FS web site could be an option.

- Yanghee Kim encouraged faculty to send emails on topics of concern to their Faculty Senate Senators and Executive Committee members.

### **Adjournment**

The Forum was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.